

Soviets Say 3 Reporters Tied to CIA

By Peter Osnos

Washington Post Foreign Service

MOSCOW, May 25 — A Soviet weekly newspaper tonight accused three American correspondents in Moscow of working for the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, but provided no evidence to support the charge.

The allegation was made against Christopher Wren, bureau chief for The New York Times; Alfred Friendly Jr., correspondent for Newsweek; and George Krimsky, an Associated Press correspondent.

The attack is the most serious leveled against American correspondents in more than two years. No American journalist has been expelled from the Soviet Union since 1970.

The lengthy article, appearing in the Literary Gazette, reflects the extent to which the Soviets have reverted in recent months to the sort of hostility toward Americans here that characterized the pre-detente era, before 1972.

[All three news organizations denied the charges,

and The New York Times' publisher, Arthur Ochs Sulzberger, said that his newspaper would consider suing the CIA, if necessary, to make certain "that none of its employees or stringers are involved in intelligence activities."]

[Newsweek said Friendly was nearing the end of his regular Moscow tour after two years there. AP said there were no plans for Krimsky to leave after a year there and the Times said Wren, with almost three years in Moscow, was not planning to leave.]

In its report on the controversy in the United States over CIA employment of journalists, the Literary Gazette said the three correspondents gave "loyalty to their real master — the CIA — combined in an astonishing way with their obligations to the free press."

The article claimed that the charge had been "testi-

fied" to in letters to the journal's editorial board, but none was quoted or summarized.

A U.S. embassy spokesman said, "We certainly know of no journalist in this town who has any connection with the CIA."

The recent resurgence of pressures against U.S. citizens here until now had been confined to diplomats. It was linked to the problems faced by Soviet diplomats in New York, who have been harassed by Jewish militants.

But the difficulties facing diplomats — and now the renewal of allegations against journalists — also reflect the generally sour atmosphere now surrounding U.S.-Soviet relations.

Resentment over Soviet actions in Angola and the emergence of detente as a major election issue have revived the sort of language in the United States that was used during the Cold War. The Soviets have responded in kind.

Singling out journalists for so serious a charge also represents a setback to the modest gains made by reporters here since last summer's European security conference at Helsinki. Travel restrictions have been eased somewhat, and correspondents are now issued multiple-entry visas.

Twenty-three journalists are accredited here for American news organizations.

In another article today, a Soviet trade union official accused the United States of violating agreements reached at the European security conference by refusing to grant entry visas to a Soviet trade union delegation.

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